



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Jacksonville District

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS WORKING IN CLOSEST
COOPERATION WITH STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
AND THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES
TO PRESERVE PRECIOUS ARCHEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES**

PONCE, Puerto Rico – In recent weeks, excavation being conducted by a contractor working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has uncovered a highly significant archeological find relating to the former Taino Indian Tribe.

The site is part of the Portugues Dam project located near Ponce.

“I want to assure the people of Puerto Rico that we are making every effort to preserve and respect the artifacts which have been uncovered,” said Eng. Jose (Chemi) Rosado, Acting Deputy District Engineer of the Antilles Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Jacksonville District. “We take this duty very seriously and are taking every measure to handle this situation properly and according to the expectations of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, to Federal laws, and with respect to our ancestors. We are under tight Federal restrictions on how we can handle artifacts and we are following those regulations to the letter with the assistance of the State Historic Preservation Office and the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources.”



Eng. Rosado noted that there are three important messages he wanted to deliver to the people of Puerto Rico concerning this issue:

1. Following Federal laws, the Antilles Office and the Jacksonville District have coordinated every move they have made in handling the artifacts with Puerto Rico's State Historic Preservation Office and the local sponsor, the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources of Puerto Rico.
2. All handling, cleaning and storing of the artifacts have been carried out under the supervision of the State Historic Preservation Office.
3. Questions have been raised about the disposition of artifacts removed from the Rio Grande de Arecibo flood control project. Those artifacts were sent to the U.S. since no laboratories in Puerto Rico were capable of performing the highly specialized work on them as per Federal regulations. The artifacts will be returned to Puerto Rico once proper storage facilities are arranged. That process now being coordinated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in full cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources.



For further information on this issue, please call Alberto Gonzalez at 787-729-6876 for the remainder of this week, while he is in Puerto Rico. Beginning next week, call Elsa Jimenez at 787-729-6877.

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